

are legal only if they do not assume the rule of a labor union.

The TEAM Act thus clearly preserves union veto power over employee involvement.

Please support the TEAM Act when it comes to the floor today.

SUPPORT H.R. 743, THE TEAM ACT, WITHOUT AMENDMENT

(Mr. WELDON of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Teamwork Act, and I would like to talk about a particular employee who is somebody who can benefit by this piece of legislation, a fellow by the name of Joe who worked for one of America's largest companies.

It seemed one of their major customers was dissatisfied with the quality of the service and product that was sent to them and was threatening to switch vendors. The employee, Joe, was working in the manufacturing section of the company and it was discovered that Joe was responsible for 73 percent of the defects for his work crew and 50 percent for the entire department. Joe's defect rate was brought up to a team meeting, and the team agreed to support Joe completely and help him find ways of discovering defects earlier and faster. They also discovered a key reason for the high rate of Joe's defects was the amount of socialism between operators.

The team was able to redesign the work area, and the result was they developed a quality ladder with five rungs depicting quality that team members may achieve, and Joe is now at the top of the ladder.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the TEAM Act and urge all my colleagues to support it.

DO NOT RUSH MEDICARE PLAN THROUGH THE HOUSE

(Mr. FORD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, the trustees and experts as they relate to the Medicare trust fund have indicated there is only \$98 billion needed in order to bring about the solvency for the Medicare Program, not the \$270 billion that is being proposed by the Republicans. The Republicans are rushing their reckless Medicare plan through the House Committee on Ways and Means, and the only thing we have seen as of today is a 60-page press release.

To increase the Medicare part B premiums on the senior citizens of this country, to double those premiums over the next 6 or 7 years on the seniors who are on fixed, limited incomes is absolutely wrong. I would hope the Republicans would get that message and listen to what Naomi Cutrer said

in the USA Today newspaper yesterday, that it is a shame for the Republicans to rush it through and to add these increases and to bring about this hardship in the Medicare Program.

AMERICANS WANT REAL ANSWERS TO PROBLEMS

(Mr. GUTKNECHT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, this past week the Democrats' Special Caucus Task Force on Medicare held a series of mock Medicare hearings. Let us examine the record. Can anyone remember the exact number of Medicare reforms the Democrats Special Task Force on Medicare has proposed? The answer is zippo, zilch, nada, zero, the big goose egg.

Liberals love to pose and posture. They love to pretend and feign concern. One week it is school lunches, the next it is student loans, and now it is Medicare. But the routine is pretty predictable. They distort the Republican position and make us look like monsters, but then they never propose any solutions for their own to deal with whatever the problem is.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are completely fed up with this style of leadership. They want real answers to the real problems faced by their Government. They do not want mock hearings or mock concern about Medicare.

SAVE HEALTH CARE BENEFITS FOR COAL MINERS

(Mr. POSHARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POSHARD. Mr. Speaker, we have over 100,000 retired coal miners in America today, men and women who for 25, 30, even for 40 years exposed themselves to great danger to provide for the energy needs of America.

In 1946 this Congress, working with the coal companies, developed a health care plan to make sure these miners would be provided adequate health care in their later years. But over the years many companies refused to honor their obligations to contribute to the employer funded UMW health and retirement funds, creating a crisis which threatened the health and security of well over 100,000 retirees.

This Congress responded, and in 1992 we enacted the Coal Industry Retiree Health Benefits Act to make sure companies paid their fair share, to make sure that health care for current and retired coal miners would be preserved for now and in the future.

Last week, Mr. Speaker, that act was overturned in the Ways and Means Committee, leaving these miners to face an uncertain future with regard to their health care. This is wrong, Mr. Speaker, and I plead with this Congress not to enact this act.

SUPPORT H.R. 743, THE TEAM ACT

(Mr. BALLENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, should cooperation between employees and employers be illegal? Today, 88 percent of the private sector work force cannot influence the terms and conditions of their employment by sitting down as a group with management and sharing ideas on improving the company. Those 88 percent are nonunionized workers, and it is illegal for employees and an employer to work together to resolve workplace issues using committees or teams that fall within the definition of a labor organization, unless those employees are represented by a union.

An employer can have a suggestion box or hold a conference to discuss ideas in the abstract with employees, but it is illegal for an employer to follow through on any of these activities with actual workplace changes that are developed in consultation with the employees, unless those workers are represented by a union.

The TEAM Act would give nonunion employees the same right as union employees—the right to work with the employer to resolve workplace issues. Join me in supporting H.R. 743, the TEAM Act so that all employees are fairly treated and able to participate in the process of workplace improvement.

WHAT ARE REPUBLICANS HIDING?

(Mr. LEWIS of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, we are still waiting to see the details of how the Republicans will cut \$270 billion from Medicare. The Ways and Means Committee held one—only one—hearing. Even after that hearing, we do not know how they will cut Medicare. We do not have a bill.

It is a shame and disgrace that we are shut out of the process, and the details are carefully guarded from us. This is an affront—not just to Democrats, not just to Members of Congress, but to our senior citizens and the American people.

Mr. Speaker, it was Robert Frost who said, "When you build a wall, who are you trying to fence out?"

So I ask, Why is there only one hearing on this very important plan? What do my colleagues have to hide?

Do not hide the plan. Hold hearings. Let the American people be a part of this process.

□ 1230

REPUBLICANS DEDICATED TO PROMISES OF THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA

(Mrs. SEASTRAND asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SEASTRAND. Mr. Speaker, it has been 1 year since hundreds of Republican House Members and candidates gathered on the steps of the Capitol and signed a Contract With America. Since then, the Republican Party has gone on to revolutionize American politics and to change business as usual inside the beltway.

In the contract, we made specific promises to vote on specific pieces of legislation. We kept our word. We showed the American people that politicians can come to Washington and actually keep promises—something they have not seen for many years.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans are still dedicated to the promises we made in the contract. We will reduce the size and scope of the Federal Government. We will cut taxes for working families. We will reform welfare. We will balance the budget.

In short, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to fight for the change that the American people demanded last November, and we will not rest until we have accomplished our goal.

DO NOT EXCLUDE AMERICAN PEOPLE FROM THE MEDICARE DEBATE

(Mr. DINGELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, we have had 28 days of hearings on Whitewater, 14 days of hearings on Waco-Ruby Ridge. We had 2 days of hearings on the Chinese prison system.

Mr. Speaker, 1 day of hearing has been held on Medicare. We were supposed to commence the markup of this legislation right after we returned from the August recess. The legislation was supposed to be ready for the floor. Yet time after time, this proposal has been postponed.

We have not had but 1 day of hearing. We have not considered the legislation. The clock is running. The calendar is turning.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to be fair. What do my Republican colleagues have to hide? Why is it that they are afraid to bring the American people into consideration of their proposal to cut Medicare \$270 billion, to make a savings that is only necessary to be \$89 billion, according to the trustees of the Social Security System?

Let us be fair. Let us be open. Let us have hearings. Let us not continue this process of delay, while we at the same time exclude the American people from the process.

REPUBLICANS ARE STRENGTHENING, PROTECTING, AND PRESERVING MEDICARE

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from California [Mr. MCKEON], my colleague from Santa Clarita, was telling me that over the weekend he talked to a constituent who said to him,

It was interesting. Last Friday I turned on CNN and I saw the Democrats out on the lawn in the rain holding these hearings, claiming that Republicans were not holding hearings on Medicare. And then I flipped to C-SPAN, and there was the hearings in the Committee on Ways and Means on the issue of health care reform and Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, I am struck to hear the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. DINGELL] talk about the litany of hearings on other issues. The Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Commerce held 26 hearings. Last Friday's was the 27th hearing on the issue of Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, I tore out a letter in yesterday's L.A. Times in which this fellow, Frank Anderson from Irvine, said that,

On January 3, 1992, at age 65, my Medicare part B premiums were \$31.80 per month. To and including January 3, 1995, I have had 3 increases, about \$5 each, to raise my premium to \$46.10 per month. If nothing is done, and continuing at this rate for the next 7 years, I would expect 7 more \$5 increases to raise the premium to about \$81.10 per month.

Mr. Speaker, he goes on to point to the fact that our total would be about \$90; President Clinton's, \$83. We are strengthening, protecting, and preserving Medicare.

THE RICH GET RICHER AND YOU KNOW THE REST

(Miss COLLINS of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Miss COLLINS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise to question the direction of our economy. A recent study by the Economic Policy Institute indicates that although our economic growth has been healthy, living standards for the average American family have continued to fall. The study suggests that there are two types of inequality that have led to the disconnect between economic growth and living standards. First, in the 1990's, overall wage growth has been dampened by a redistribution of income from labor to owners of capital in the form of profits. The report indicates that the economic return to capital, has actually reached historically high levels in this country. Second, however, the growth of wage inequality that began in the 1980's and persisted throughout the 1990's has prevented middle- and low-wage earners from achieving higher wages and has forced them to accept reductions in their real wages. In addition, of course, earnings have failed to keep up with inflation.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you and the leadership of this House that if these trends continue, your make-be-

lieve revolution may prompt a real revolution and it will not be economic. Have a nice day.

IN SUPPORT OF THE TEAM ACT

(Mr. TALENT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TALENT. Mr. Speaker, there has been an outstanding practice going on in American workplaces and it is picking up speed. It has been going on for the last 10 or 15 years. It is called employee involvement or TEAMS.

People know this kind of practice as quality circles or safety committees. They can be relatively formal or informal. Here's an example: Employees have a problem with scheduling, and the employer, instead of deciding these things unilaterally says to his supervisors, "Get together with some of the employees and figure out what you are going to do."

This TEAM concept has increased employee satisfaction and American productivity and competitiveness around the world. But unfortunately it is probably illegal under the National Labor Relations Act, because the NLRB thinks of TEAMS as company unions, according to a 60-year-old statute.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to have a chance to do something about that today with the TEAM Act. That is an act that will legalize the kind of employee involvement that is already going on in tens of thousands of workplaces around the country today. It is something that employees want. It will empower them and improve employee satisfaction and American competitiveness.

The bill specifically says company unions are still illegal. It does not apply in organized workplaces. The House ought to pass it today.

NO BUDGET, NO PAY

(Mr. DURBIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Speaker, Speaker NEWT GINGRICH announced last week that if political gridlock in Washington results in closing down Federal services to our Nation, so be it.

The Speaker also went on to say that he, as the Speaker, is prepared to force America into a default on its debt for the first time in our history if he does not get his way.

Mr. Speaker, too many politicians on Capitol Hill are talking about a political train wreck as if we are playing with toy trains. A shutdown of Federal services is a serious matter. Members of Congress should take it seriously.

That is why I have introduced legislation that would cut off the paychecks of Members of Congress and the President if the Federal Government shuts down because of budgetary gridlock.